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Summary record of the thirty-sixth meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 27 September 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Bras Gomes

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Fourth periodic report of Argentina (E/C.12/ARG/4; E/C.12/ARG/Q/4 and E/C.12/ARG/Q/4/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Argentina took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Avruj** (Argentina), introducing his country's fourth periodic report, said that December 2015 had marked a turning point for Argentina, as it had resumed an open dialogue with the world and had entered into a new phase of institution-building. The country was undergoing a paradigm shift, having abandoned the populist policies of the past decade in favour of realistic policies aimed at finding joint solutions to its problems.

3. However, the path towards a new Argentina characterized by truth and transparency would likely be fraught with difficulty. Faced with a complex economic situation, the Government had negotiated a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in order to meet its commitments while keeping financing costs to a minimum. The current poverty rate and structural deficiencies were attributable to the squandering of large amounts of public money which, owing to corruption, had never reached their intended destination. However, Argentina was committed to restoring confidence in an independent judiciary that would never again countenance impunity for perpetrators of corruption and was working to strengthen its social policies in an effort to combat poverty. It was hoped that, in 2018, 56.4 per cent of primary spending in the public sector would be invested in social benefits.

4. Since active public policies were a prerequisite for the full realization of human rights, the Government had ensured that, in the draft budget currently before the National Congress, core public policies were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the national goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The restructuring of the National Statistics and Census Institute had strengthened the country's statistical capacities and ability to produce reliable statistical data. As pointed out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Argentina had shifted its position on visits from special rapporteurs and working groups, which it was now willing to receive. The progress that it had made in advancing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons had likewise been recognized by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

5. Argentina was one of the first countries in the region to adopt a national action plan on human rights. The plan mainstreamed a human rights perspective in public policy implementation by setting out 243 priority commitments related to human rights along with goals to be achieved by 2020. The process of implementing the plan at the federal level, which had begun in 2018, would serve to advance the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the country. The open and constructive debate on the law to decriminalize abortion within the National Congress was a testament to the progress being made in that direction. The Government understood that social inclusion policies should not only address economic or income-related issues but respond to specific needs with a view to guaranteeing rights for all persons, including migrants. Argentina operated and would continue to operate an open-door policy, having already taken in some 100,000 Venezuelan nationals in addition to Senegalese and Syrian migrants.

6. The Government continued to support the implementation of policies on memory, truth and justice, and reparation, and the conduct of judicial proceedings for crimes against humanity. Progress was being made in spite of the aspersions cast on the Government's commitment to that cause by mean-spirited political opponents. In fact, better results had been achieved in terms of prosecuting crimes against humanity under the incumbent administration than under its predecessors. By identifying the fallen soldiers buried in Darwin Cemetery, the Government had made the greatest humanitarian gesture to date to

honour the heroes of the Malvinas War and to provide their families with the support long denied to them by the State.

7. In the area of education, the most ambitious scholarship programme in the country's history had been launched with the aim of increasing the compulsory and higher education completion rate of students between the ages of 18 and 30. To date, more than 500,000 students were in receipt of a scholarship.

8. **Mr. Uprimny** (Country Rapporteur) said that Argentina, despite being an upper-middle income country with vast natural resources and a high level of human development, still struggled to achieve inclusive social development. Indeed, its current poverty rate and Gini coefficient were unacceptable for such a developed country. The recent currency crisis, which had prompted the State party to conclude a US$ 50 billion financing deal with the IMF and to adopt severe adjustment and austerity measures in an effort to quickly clear its tax deficit, was a major cause for concern. Recalling the criteria and guidance set out in the Committee's general comment No. 19 (2008) on the right to social security and its substantive statement of July 2016 on public debt, austerity measures and the Covenant (E/C.12/2016/1), he asked how the State party, in applying those measures, would ensure that it continued to meet its obligations under the Covenant.

9. The Committee was also concerned that the drop in tax revenue attributable to the abolition of duties on mining and agricultural exports and to cuts in progressive taxes, such as income tax, would lead to a reduction in the resources available for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and to an increase in economic inequality, which could disproportionately affect vulnerable groups. Given that the tax cuts made to date had not yielded the economic growth expected and that the State party's public debt had grown in recent years, it would be helpful to know how it intended to replace that lost tax revenue without undermining the realization of Covenant rights or relying on regressive taxation. Although the State party had made a number of adjustments to maintain purchasing power, including by providing retirees and pensioners whose pensions did not exceed the minimum with partial refunds of value-added tax (VAT), their impact appeared to be limited. Above all, the State party should avoid taking measures that would limit the redistributive capacity of its taxation system and exacerbate economic inequality.

10. He asked whether, in order to remedy the drop in tax revenue, the State party had considered reviewing its generous tax exemption scheme, particularly as the total value of the tax exemptions offered was seemingly almost equal to the tax deficit in question. He also wondered whether the State party had conducted a study with a view to determining which exemptions were truly necessary and justified, including those enjoyed by senior judicial officials.

11. The Committee was concerned by the weakening of some of the key institutions responsible for guaranteeing the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. The decision to assign the functions of the former Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security to a department within the recently renamed Ministry of Production and Labour was particularly regrettable. That decision might limit the capacity of the Ministry of Production and Labour to mediate in labour disputes, as it could choose to prioritize production needs over respect for labour rights. He asked how the State party planned to prevent institutional changes of that nature from undermining the effectiveness of social policies and whether it might reconsider reversing the decisions taken in that connection.

12. He was disappointed to learn that, despite the Committee having called upon the State party to revise the procedures for appointing an Ombudsman in order to speed up the recruitment process, the post had still not been filled. He asked, given the essential nature of the functions of the Ombudsman's Office, what steps the State party was taking to rectify that situation.

13. While the State party's improved ability to produce reliable statistical data following the restructuring of the National Statistics and Census Institute was a positive development, the unavailability of historical statistical data effectively prevented the Committee from assessing the evolution of the social situation in the country. He asked what the State party was doing to guarantee the availability of historical statistical data and the reliability of statistical data produced in the future and to avoid the deficiencies that had marred the

previous statistical system. He wondered whether the State party had considered making the National Statistics and Census Institute independent of the Government.

14. The Committee had received reports detailing the violent repression by the authorities of social protests against the treatment meted out to, inter alia, labourers, teachers and the Mapuche community. He asked what steps the State party was taking to ensure that such incidents were properly investigated, to prevent the unnecessary and disproportionate use of force against persons taking part in social protests and to guarantee the free exercise of the right to protest.

15. Despite the progress made by the State party in ensuring non-discrimination and in promoting gender equality, there were still a number of areas where there was room for improvement. It was his understanding that the national anti-discrimination plan adopted several years previously had still not been implemented. The delegation might confirm whether that was the case. Moreover, members of the LGBTI community still encountered discrimination in access to employment, harassment in the education system and problems in registering same-sex marriages and changes in gender, despite the enactment of legislation guaranteeing those rights. Significant gender disparities persisted in the labour market in the form of a large gender wage gap, a glass ceiling preventing women from occupying senior positions in certain sectors and the overrepresentation of women in the care sector.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 3.40 p.m.

16. **Ms. Díaz Frers** (Argentina) said that the currency crisis and the country's economic volatility could be partly attributed to its worst drought in 50 years, the increase in interest rates in the United States, the increase in oil prices and the crises in Brazil and Turkey. However, the Argentinian economy had already been in a fragile state on account of its large tax and external deficits. The Government was making fiscal adjustments to mitigate the need for financing arrangements that might exacerbate the situation while protecting social expenditure, particularly income transfer programmes. Those programmes accounted for approximately 11 per cent of the country's gross domestic product and had served to reduce its poverty rate by some 20 per cent. Ninety-eight per cent of persons aged 65 years or over were covered by either a contributory or non-contributory pension scheme. Many women had been able to access a pension scheme by paying arrears. New initiatives such as a universal pension scheme for older persons had also been launched. Retirement pensions were updated every three months in keeping with the inflation rate and the adjustable minimum living wage.

17. Steps were also being taken to protect expenditure on children. The Government would only countenance increasing the country's tax deficit if it was done to increase social programme coverage for children, which currently stood at 92.6 per cent. It was hoped that 100 per cent coverage could be achieved through family allowances, deductions for two-income households, universal child allowance and maternity allowance. Those allowances were likewise updated every three months in keeping with the inflation rate and the adjustable minimum living wage. There were plans to increase the amount of the universal child allowance by 10 per cent by the end of 2018 so as to guarantee all families with children a minimum income.

18. Initially, the Government had decided to abolish the duties on mining and agricultural exports gradually in order to reduce the country's tax burden, as it considered those duties to be a bar to reducing the external deficit that had made the country's economy so vulnerable. However, following the onset of the currency crisis, it had suspended the gradual abolition of those export duties and had even gone as far as applying new duties to all exports in the form a lump sum so as to keep distortions to a minimum. The new duties would increase the country's gross domestic product by 1 per cent, which would help to reduce cuts in expenditure.

19. A number of new tax exemptions had been introduced which provided partial refunds for the recipients of family allowances and partial VAT refunds for certain retirees and pensioners. The most generous exemptions had the effect of reducing VAT on food to 50 per cent and of abolishing VAT on certain services altogether. Although the tax exemptions enjoyed by judges were currently under review, it would be difficult to modify

them, as judges maintained that any change to their income would affect their independence. Several income tax exemptions had already been abolished. However, others had to be maintained as to abolish them would lead to an increase in public expenditure to compensate the lost income.

20. Between late 2015 and June 2018, new regulations had been introduced to increase the robustness and reliability of statistics. The aim was to develop new strategic domains that would be adapted to the Access to Information Act. All statistical information should be freely available and easily accessible. To that end, a number of programmes had been introduced to familiarize the public with statistics and publish data on digital platforms. In addition, the publication of new statistics or data included methodological reports accounting for changes since the previous data had been published. However, it was difficult to compare different data owing to unreliable data collection methods used in the past.

21. **Mr. Szuchet** (Argentina) said that the decision to restructure certain ministries had been taken to simplify decision-making by centralizing some authorities and reducing the number of jurisdictions. In addition, the President had decided to reduce and reorganize his cabinet to facilitate improved coordination between ministries. It should be noted that some secretariats received the same budgetary resources as the former ministries they had replaced. The restructuring included the creation of a new higher authority in the hierarchy of public bodies, but the organizational structure of secretariats and subsecretariats remained unchanged. The aim of the restructuring model had been to bring together those politically responsible for defining public policy with the relevant government secretariat. Ministries would continue to work with the President to implement policies, but policies requiring coordinated action could be streamlined through a centralized agency that examined cross-cutting issues.

22. **Mr. Schapira** (Argentina) said that the Ombudsman was appointed by the bicameral committee on the Ombudsman's Office and the National Congress. A resolution on the appointment of an Ombudsman had been hindered by the partial dissolution of the National Congress in 2017, despite the resolution meeting all necessary legal requirements. As concerns had been expressed about the appointment process, the legislature intended to improve it in line with relevant instruments and resolutions of United Nations agencies and other organizations, including the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). Consequently, there would be public hearings for candidates and activities to raise awareness of the appointment process, and the Chamber of Deputies would soon be sending a list of candidates to the bicameral committee.

23. Freedom of expression and freedom to protest, within the boundaries of the law, were guaranteed. Over 5,000 requests for public demonstrations had been submitted in 2017. Legal proceedings were under way to examine the violence that had taken place during two days of public protest about pension reform in December 2017. In that instance, acts of violence, including the use of improvised weapons against the police, had been caught on video, although some police officers had also used excessive force.

24. Turning to some individual cases of interest to the Committee, he said that Milagro Sala was being held under house arrest in Jujuy, and the case remained sub judice. She was being held as a precautionary measure, ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and upheld by the Supreme Court, while allegations of embezzlement and misuse of funds were investigated. The case of Rafael Nahuel, involving a group seizing land to which they were not necessarily entitled, was the subject of a judicial investigation. The case of a number of lecturers and teachers being evicted from a tent they had erected without permission in front of the National Congress was before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

25. **Mr. Szuchet** (Argentina) said that the case of Rafael Nahuel remained sub judice, but the decentralized body responsible for indigenous affairs was monitoring the case. More generally, the actions by the law enforcement authorities in the case of demonstrations or evictions, including the use of force, required a warrant or order issued by a judge.

Regarding human rights defenders, all guarantees and processes were being assured and carried out by the Public Prosecution Service until an Ombudsman was appointed.

26. **Ms. Quinteros** (Argentina) said that the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism was considered a model for other South American countries. It had been developing an interactive map of discrimination and had almost completed a national anti-discrimination plan, based on the 2005 National Plan to Combat Discrimination. The new plan would be implemented alongside the national action plan on human rights.

27. Legislative progress on sexual identity and diversity had been made at all levels since the establishment of the National Sexual Diversity Coordination Unit. Cooperation with the different provinces was vital, owing to their varying individual situations, and the Unit aimed to ensure that public policy on sexual identity and diversity was standardized at the federal level. Its work included mapping all legislative projects and programmes implemented nationwide to determine their impact on LGBTI people, with a focus on investigations of hate crime. It also aimed to achieve basic minimum standards for the treatment of transgender people in conflict with the law, and to ensure that the children of divorced parents could amend their information in the civil register as easily as possible.

28. In 2016, the Ministry of Security had established a department for sexual diversity, which was led by a transgender woman. It focused on institutional violence and the harassment of LGBTI people within the security forces. It had provided training to over 15,000 people in 2016, and had successfully introduced changes such as the introduction of transgender wings in federal and provincial prisons for women.

29. Since the introduction of the Gender Identity Act, 6,870 changes had been made to the civil register, 103 of which had related to transgender children. The Government was working to help other countries in the region to adopt similar practices. The national plan on business and human rights, presently under development, would include a chapter on sexual diversity in business to facilitate access to employment for LGBTI people. There was also a programme on the employment and social integration of transgender people, which had been most successful in the provinces of Santa Fe and Buenos Aires; for example, over 30 people had been offered jobs by the City of Buenos Aires.

30. **Ms. Oizerovich** (Argentina) said that the Sexual and Reproductive Health Directorate worked to implement legislation on sexual and bodily diversity; provide training for health-care professionals; raise awareness of how to ensure decent and respectful treatment of gender-diverse people; look into registration in the health-care system and the treatments available in different provinces; and move away from the pathology model in legislation relating to issues of gender diversity. It had also prepared a survey on the living conditions of transgender people.

31. The Directorate was working to ensure that surgical and hormonal treatments for gender-diverse people were included in health-care programmes. In 2014–2015, it had carried out a national analysis of the health-care facilities providing treatment and assistance in that area. Guidelines for health-care professionals on providing comprehensive health care for transgender people were under development. In addition, the Directorate had extended its work to children and adolescents, and was collaborating with the scientific community and the Directorate for HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. A free hotline had also been set up to provide advice and support related to sexual health.

32. **Ms. Brandy** (Argentina) said that, since 2011, there had been a coordination unit for sexual health that worked with government bodies, academia, civil society organizations, trade unions and other relevant actors. The coordination unit held meetings with representatives of such bodies, as well as round tables, mainly with civil society organizations, on topics such as sexual diversity in employment, and had organized an interministerial round table to promote non-discrimination and equal opportunities for LGBTI people.

33. In 2013, the training and social security available to transgender people had been extended by the Ministry of Labour, ensuring access to appropriate benefits and welfare. With the involvement of civil society organizations, social security coverage had been

guaranteed nationwide. The National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies had worked with local and provincial authorities to provide a tripartite approach to issues of gender diversity in employment through social dialogue, and had also worked with the National Human Resources Unit at the former Ministry of Labour on institutional measures in line with the law on gender identity. The Council had also provided training for its staff.

34. **Ms. Quinteros** (Argentina) said that the National Action Plan on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women 2017–2019 had been launched in 2016. There were two offices within the judiciary responsible for addressing domestic violence, one being the Domestic Violence Office of the Supreme Court. The National Council of Women had instituted the first national programme on equal rights and opportunities, which was supported by the Government and would become operational in October 2018. Argentina had been the first country in the world to introduce a legal quota for elected officials, requiring 30 per cent of them to be female, and, in 2017, had increased the quota to 50 per cent.

35. There remained fewer women than men in the labour market, and women spent more time than men doing unpaid work. According to the most recent available information from the International Labour Organization, women earned 27.2 per cent less than men in the formal sector, and the gap increased among women who had a low level of education or worked in the informal sector. A section of the September 2018 agreement between Argentina and the IMF was dedicated to support for gender equality measures, and empowering women was one of the priorities for the 2018 Argentine Presidency of the Group of 20 (G20).

36. **Mr. De Schutter**, referring to the exploitation of unconventional fossil fuels, asked whether the fracking operations in Vaca Muerta were consistent with the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular the reference to the "highest possible ambition" in article 4 (3). He said he was surprised that, despite the well-documented adverse effects of fracking, none of the provinces aside from Mendoza had adopted specific rules on fracking activities. He wished to draw the State party's attention to the Committee's 2016 recommendation to Canada regarding the need to conduct consultations with local communities prior to the use of fracking. In that connection, he wished to know whether human rights, especially the rights to water, housing, health and food, were included in impact assessments carried out before fracking projects, and if not, why not. Where the impact on rights was deemed justified in the light of the expected benefits of fracking, how was the balance struck between competing considerations?

37. **Mr. Kerdoun** said that it would be helpful to know how the emergency measures taken to address the crisis facing the State party and to meet the draconian conditions imposed by the IMF would affect the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in Argentina.

38. **Mr. Kedzia** asked to what extent the State party had taken into account the Committee's guidance on the application of austerity measures and cooperation with lending institutions, notably the Committee's substantive statement on public debt, austerity measures and the Covenant, in deciding how to address the current crisis.

39. **Mr. Uprimny** said that, when considering austerity measures through the lens of Covenant rights, the protection of vulnerable groups was important, but so too were other aspects, such as consultations and the impartial assessment of the measures. He wished to know whether the newly reinstated duties on exports were temporary and whether the Government believed they would really have the expected benefit, given the devaluation of the peso. He would appreciate additional information on the allegations by civil society organizations of police brutality during demonstrations.

40. **Ms. Diaz Frers** (Argentina) said that the Government's intention was to accelerate the reduction of the deficit but, owing to the level of the interest repayments, it would have to continue to run a deficit for a few years. It had opted for fixed export duties as they were believed to cause fewer distortions in the market. In the coming year, the Government planned to increase expenditure to protect vulnerable groups, especially children and older persons, by 0.2 per cent of gross domestic product. It also aimed to achieve universal access

to clean drinking water and 75 per cent access to a sewage system. It was attempting to shield the vulnerable population from the effects of the elimination of energy and transport subsidies by applying "social" tariffs for such services. The Government was seeking to reduce expenditure by promoting more public-private partnerships and, while it was rationalizing spending on goods and services, funds earmarked for education and health care were being left intact. The reduction of discretionary transfers to the provinces was more than offset by the introduction of automatic transfers, which had the added advantage of protecting the provinces from the vagaries of changes in government. The Government fully expected to achieve a primary balance by 2019.

41. **Ms. Quinteros** (Argentina), noting that Argentina had the world's second-largest reserves of shale gas, said that political instability had cost the country its energy self-sufficiency. In response, the current Government had begun courting private investment with a view to regaining self-sufficiency and lowering the price of oil. While Argentina was strongly committed to the Paris Agreement, there was a need for greater coordination, as natural resources belonged to the provinces, not the federation. Argentina had a national environmental policy, a law on hazardous waste and another on a minimum budget for the management of water resources. Neuquén Province had the most advanced regulatory framework for the environment in the country, and its regulations covered fracking. The framework was based on standards used by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and required businesses operating in Vaca Muerta to hold an environmental certificate. The general public was also encouraged to take part in environmental impact assessments.

42. **Ms. Diaz Frers** (Argentina) said that it was important to remember that Argentina had been running a grossly underestimated deficit for many years, compounded by inaccurate reporting of income and expenditure and by "invisible debt" that Argentina had eventually been forced to reimburse in 2016. An IMF loan was the least expensive way of reversing the deficit while continuing to protect vulnerable groups.

43. **Mr. Szuchet** (Argentina) said that law enforcement protocols applied to all demonstrations and any breaches thereof were liable to prosecution. Further information on the cases of alleged police brutality raised by the Committee would be provided in writing.

44. **Mr. Chen** (Country Task Force) said that the Government had a duty not only to facilitate the organization of demonstrations but also to make every possible effort to prevent peaceful gatherings from turning violent.

45. Noting the considerable rise in unemployment from 5.9 per cent in 2015 to over 9 per cent currently, he said that it would be interesting to know how the State party intended to tackle unemployment, especially among young women, in the current economic situation. Referring to paragraph 85 of the report, he wished to know to what social security benefits the 60 per cent of unregistered workers who had not been able to regularize their employment status were entitled. It would be helpful to know whether and how the Government intended to reinstate regular benefits under the non-contributory pension system, in particular for persons with disabilities. Lastly, he would appreciate information on measures taken to address underemployment, especially in the informal sector.

46. **The Chair** said that she would like to know how many non-contributory pensions for persons with disabilities had been stopped in 2017 without due warning or due process, how many complaints had been lodged as a result of that action and how many such pensions had been restored. The Committee had been informed that the age of access for women to the non-contributory pension had been increased from 60 years to 65 years. Comments in that regard would be welcome. She would also like to know what the impact on child poverty rates would be of the recently introduced restrictions relating to universal child allowance payments to migrants legally resident in Argentina for less than three years and women with seven or more children. Information on employment programmes for women in rural regions, on their impact, on related obstacles and on potential areas for improvement in that regard would be useful. It would be interesting to hear why so few new trade unions had been registered in the past year.

The meeting was suspended at 5.10 p.m. and resumed at 5.25 p.m.

47. **Ms. Diaz Frers** (Argentina) said it was true that unemployment was particularly high among women and young people; programmes had been set up to help them find work. In 2016, the unemployment rate had stood at 10.3 per cent. The current rate of around 9 per cent was slightly lower than that for the period 2004–2006, a time of significant national economic recovery. There were plans to introduce education grants for young people to allow them to complete their studies, with the highest achievers being offered jobs. A number of existing employment, training and work programmes were currently being overhauled and merged into a single unified programme to ensure greater coherence at the policy level. In addition, a scheme had been set up to help beneficiaries of social programmes enter the formal labour market; under the scheme, they would receive supplementary financial payments.

48. Under the contributory social security system, the retirement age had been set at 65 years for men and 60 years for women. In order to cover all persons who had not made sufficient contributions, a universal old-age pension had been established, paid to all persons aged 65 years or over. Owing to the pension replacement rate and increases in life expectancy, the average retirement age for women was currently 63 years, despite the fact that they could retire at the age of 60 years.

49. **Ms. Brandy** (Argentina) said that the Argentine social security system was composed of a contributory component, covering pensions and family benefits for employees and their dependents, and a non-contributory component, which helped to safeguard the social and economic rights of those sectors of the population not in formal employment. The non-contributory component provided for pensions and universal child allowance, an allowance for children with disabilities and a prenatal allowance. In total, 98 per cent of the population aged 65 years or over was covered by the social security system. The total number of such beneficiaries stood at 9 million, 5 million of whom fell under the non-contributory component.

50. Currently, the domestic legal framework did not provide for a specific disability pension. Although an occupational invalidity pension had been introduced under Act No. 13.478 of 1948, it was not in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The National Social Security Administration had been made responsible for the administration of non-contributory pensions, the aim being to better serve the most vulnerable sectors of the population and to streamline the payment process for them. In the past few years, significant numbers of occupational invalidity pensions had been stopped because it had been found that the beneficiaries in question had not, in fact, been entitled to those benefits, either because they had been receiving other benefits in tandem, contrary to the applicable regulations, or because they had failed to declare certain assets. Work was ongoing to reform the legislation on pensions to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities. However, the existing requirements for potential beneficiaries would remain in place for the time being.

51. Following a detailed study, it had been found that a number of trade unions seeking to register had failed to meet certain legal and regulatory requirements. Such trade unions had been informed of the need to provide additional information in that regard but had either failed to do so, or had done so only once the corresponding deadline had passed.

52. **Ms. Diaz Frers** (Argentina) said that women with seven children or more had an inalienable right to a non-contributory pension. Moreover, depending on their income, such women had the right either to tax deductions for each child or assistance under the contributory system. If they were not in the formal labour market, they were entitled to universal child allowance for the first five of their children. Migrants working in the formal labour market were immediately entitled to benefits, like any other resident of Argentina, even if they paid their taxes under the simplified tax regime and were not classed as economically dependent workers. Only migrants not in formal employment were asked to provide proof of three years' residence. Children of migrants born in Argentine territory acquired Argentine nationality immediately and were thus entitled to universal child allowance.

53. **Ms. Liebenberg** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know what new measures had been taken to prevent violence against women, in particular in rural areas.

and what budgetary allocations had been made for support services for victims of violence. Information would be welcome on the number of successful prosecutions of traffickers in persons and their accomplices and on any measures taken to assist and protect their victims and reintegrate them into society.

54. It would be interesting to hear whether any steps had been taken to ensure that working and middle-class families, small enterprises and cooperatives could afford to pay their utility bills and were able to remain financially secure.

55. She would be interested to hear the delegation's views on the recent comments by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to the effect that family farms lacked government support and were losing out to large agribusinesses, and that a significant proportion of the population was affected by food insecurity. Information would be welcome on any measures taken to support family farming within campesino and indigenous communities and to strengthen their security of land tenure. An update on the status of the implementing regulations for Act No. 27.118 on family farming would also be appreciated.

56. She would like to know how the State party reconciled its commitment to regularize and upgrade the rising number of informal urban settlements with the recent massive cuts in expenditure on infrastructure and public utilities and services, and how the populations of those settlements would be affected by the cuts.

57. Information would be welcome on any plans to put in place a legal framework and protocols regulating evictions that reflected the procedural and substantive guarantees set out in the Committee's general comment No. 7 on the right to adequate housing, and on the status of the bill suspending evictions in urban areas for the next four years.

58. It would be useful to hear about any government strategies to control speculation in the housing market.

59. There had been reports of cuts to health programmes that affected persons with disabilities and recipients of non-contributory pensions. The Committee had noted the disappointing decision of the Senate to reject a bill decriminalizing abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. She asked what was being done to ensure that a protocol for legal abortions was put in place across the country, in line with the Supreme Court ruling of 13 March 2012. Information would be welcome on any measures adopted to ensure a transition to alternative measures of outpatient care for persons with psychosocial disabilities to enable them to integrate into the wider community. Lastly, she wished to know what measures had been taken or proposed to tackle the obesity epidemic and to discourage tobacco use, including restrictions on the marketing of tobacco products and ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.